chain, Ie, Ihoya, and Kudaka islands. The main island is about sixty miles long, its length running generally northeast to southwest. It has an irregular coast line, peninsulas which jut out into the sea, and two isthmuses, one near present Camp Kue, the other farther north at Ishikawa. The width of the island varies from two to eighteen miles. 133 131

Okinawa may be divided into three geographical regions, which also roughly correspond to the ancient division of the island into a northern district (Kunigami or Yambaru), a central district (Nakagami), and a southern district (Shimajiri). [631]

The northern district takes up about two-thirds of the area of the island. It begins at the northern isthmus which runs from Ishikawa town on the Pacific side to Nakadomari on the East China Sea side. South of this line, the island runs more or less in a north-south direction; north of the line, the island is situated in a pronounced northeast-southwest direction. Certain features distinguish this northern area from the two southern parts of Okinawa. A mountain ridge, almost entirely forested, runs down the center. Drainage from the short streams which rise in the mountains is down the east and west slopes. Villages and towns are on or near the coastal flatlands or on the coastal rolling hills. There are few settlements in the interior of the northern part of the island. 131 631 133 [137] [361]

The central region of the island extends south from the Ishikawa-Nakadomari isthmus to the Naha-Yonabaru line. A corridor beginning on the eastern side at Yonabaru on Buckner Bay (formerly Nakagusuku-wan) connects with a long valley beginning around Naha. This provides a natural route cutting across the southern part of the island. The central region is the area of oldest settlement. It and the region to the south were the areas of the most intensive warfare during the campaign for Okinawa. The central region has a patternless physiography. Low rolling eroded hills, stony hills with sharp relief, dissected uplands and escarpments alternate with small alluvial valleys and flatlands. On these and on the lower slopes of the less stony hills cultivation takes place. Limestone sinks and caverns are commonplace. The most rugged terrain in this area is the region around Shuri and its northern approaches, the scene of the most prolonged fighting of the war in Okinawa. Unlike the north, settlements are scattered throughout the countryside, usually on the low lands at the base of hills, along the coasts, or in narrow winding valleys with low passes leading from one to the other. [487] [361]

The third region of the island extends from the Naha-Yonabaru line to the southern tip of the island. It is like the central part in the haphazard distribution of its land forms but somewhat flatter. Part of it is a limestone plain. The highest elevations are around the hills and mountains along Buckner Bay, with its narrow flat coastal strips, and along the southern portion of the Chinen peninsula, which also has flat beaches and beach ridges. It is an area of small plains, long, narrow but steep limestone mountains, and of rolling hills, escarpments which often abruptly end on the water's edge. In the area of one of these escarpments, Yaeju Dake, the final battle scenes of the war took place. The settlement

1:Glacken E-5 (1951-1952) 1953 AC7 Okinawa AC7

175 167 Another departure from the past was that Okinawans, soon after the turn of the century, were provided with opportunities for emigration. The history of Okinawan emigration is not well known. But in the twentieth century, the people of Okinawa changed from an almost complete ignorance of the outside world to one of the most widely travelled and informed peoples of the Orient. Okinawan settlements in the twentieth century were scattered in many parts of the world, such as Peru, Argentina, Brazil, Hawaii, and the Japanese mandates of the Pacific, Singapore, Japan, Manchuria, and Korea. The cessation of this historic emigration is an event pregnant with meaning for the future. The population and its natural increase now must subsist on the island.

175 487 438 [161] Late nineteenth and twentieth century improvements in roads and communication, modest as they were by American standards, broke down some of the isolation of the three districts of Okinawa. The forests and the lack of roads to the north had always discouraged contact. Much of the trade in firewood between the north and the south, even up to the recent war, was done by ship. Elsewhere there were only paths and in the north, not even these. In 1895 Chamberlain wrote of the sparsely inhabited northern (Kunigami) forest area whose inhabitants were "despised for their poverty and rough speech by the natives of the central and southern provinces." Later on he remarked about the "groans of Japanese officials when obliged to go their country rounds," and, that, in the north it was necessary for them to carry a tent.[28]

175 177 219 As the main island in the newly created province (ken) of Japan, Okinawa benefitted from the scientific approach to agronomy pursued enthusiastically by the Japanese, in contrast with the Chinese and the Koreans before their annexation. Concentration on the development of suitable varieties of rice, the study of sugar cane, plant disease and agricultural techniques represented a body of knowledge that could be applied with local adaptations to all parts of the empire.

175 178 565 [511] Direct Japanese annexation meant also the disappearance of the top heavy native nobility or gentry (shizoku) to be displaced by the Japanese elite, although membership in the Okinawan nobility continued to be recorded in the family registers up to the recent war. The displacement of the old higher social classes resulted in a certain levelling of all the people, a levelling which continued up to the war, and was accentuated in an economic way by the widespread impoverishment of rich and poor alike in the campaign for Okinawa.

7

Okinawa in World War II

175 648 The terra incognita described by Bayard Taylor in 1853 became the

28 Chamberlain, as cited, 294, 459

The village is one of a series of settlements in a long narrow valley, on a limestone plain, bordered on the east by a steep ridge, up to 300 feet in elevation and running in a northwest and southeast direction, which divides the valley from the sea. On these cliff like formations, large outcrops are covered with shrubs and miscanthus grass. Lanes and roads lead from the valley floor to the summits of these hills, where villagers collect their firewood and grass for roof thatch. On the rocky, steep slopes of this seaward ridge, above the line of cultivation, is the tomb area. Precipitous and stony hills prevent cultivation, but occasionally a sharp tongue of land reaches far up the slope, its end protected from the rains and wash by a short stone fence.

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Between Gushichan and Hanashiro village, there is a bridge over a small stream, its upstream course obscured by its dispersion in the rice fields. The dirt road, gradually ascending, cuts through the main rice growing area of the village, on a gentle slope, reflected in the bench cultivation of the rice fields. Here and there are large rocks and stony outcrops, with an occasional scrub pine, cycad, or a covering of miscanthus. Cultivation goes around these large stones.

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The road, about one-fourth of a mile from the bridge, soon leads into what looks like, from a distance, a densely wooded area. This is the settlement.

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With the exception of the rough stony land of the limestone mountains and steep slopes, the soils of the area are the Okinawa clay loams and the Chinen stony clays lying on the limestone plains. The farm and village area takes up approximately 427 acres, of which 257 are in gently sloping Okinawa clay loams, a deep, well drained, neutral to slightly acid and very fertile soil. Another five acres is of the same type but these are in slopes, of a gradient ranging from 8-15%. There are 80 acres in gently sloping Shuri clays, shallow, moderately fertile, an olive colored, crumbly, calcareous clay; another 35 acres in the Awase clays, deep fertile, crumbly, calcareous clay of olive-gray color, and 14 acres of rough stony land.

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The hillsides and the summits are free of densely growing trees and shrubs, and the lowlands are given over to cultivation. There are no groves of trees to protect the crops from typhoons. The trees and the protection they give are confined to the village. This is typical of many villages of southern Okinawa, where the hills and mountains have few trees, and dense growths are associated with habitation.

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Inside the village, winding lanes branch off the main dirt road. The older houses are on the north side of the road. On the opposite side, the houses, newer or rebuilt since the war, adjoin the cultivated area. In the older section, the dense shrubbery, the tree lined lanes, broken occasionally by stone fences, wind through the village with footpaths branching off, sometimes past an open field, a reminder of a failure to rebuild after the war. On the northern outskirts is the village office, its gong in the yard, the open field, a playground for the children.

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1: Glacken E-5 (1951-1952) 1953 AC7 Okinawa AC7

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One feature typical of these villages is the boundary path (azekl), sometimes only a foot wide. The path is a boundary and a means of access. Roads and lanes are in the main areas of the village. They do not checkerboard a whole area. Too much land would be sacrificed. The farmer leaves his home, walks along the road or lane, and then takes a winding boundary path to his own field. In the aggregate, considerable land is taken up by boundary paths. Often the sides of the plot along the path are cut perpendicularly to take as full advantage of the soil as possible. There is little slope from the path to the field, and the paths of the rice paddy often look like miniature levees.

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In his Narrative of a Voyage of the Ship Morison, which appeared in The Chinese Repository for 1838, S. Wells Williams wrote concerning Okinawa: "Indeed the Lilliputian minuteness with which the country is subdivided is singular." The tables and the land use maps which follow document this observation. The tables, which show the number of plots and their average size, for each village, were computed from land registers in the two township offices. The three main classifications, rice, dry crop, and wild land, have been selected. To appreciate the size of these plots, one should bear in mind that a 40' x 80' lot has over 88 tsubo and that an acre contains about 1210 tsubo.

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[217] The maps represent a tiny portion of those cadastral maps collected from the township offices and of which tracings were made. They also illustrate the complete and painstaking subdivision of a village area and the general uses to which each parcel is put.

Rice Land (Ta)

a. Hanashiro

Grade	No. of Plots	Average Area in Tsubo
Total	201	140.4
1	59	52.9
2	36	160.8
3	44	182.6
4	58	179.8
5	4	212.5

b. Matsuda

Total	560	137.2
1	30	60.5
2	76	140.0
3	178	132.1
4	175	154.9
5	101	136.3

In the areas studied, no serious sheet erosion was observed
No doubt this may be a problem in parts of Okinawa, but it is doubtful that this menace will threaten the habitability of the island. Occasionally one can see a freshly hoed field on a slope that is losing its soil during a downpour. But the fact that the hills and mountains are covered with vegetation, are not too steep, and that grasses and shrubs are cut off allowing the stubble with the roots to remain in the soil effectively binds the soil of the hills and at the same time prevents flash floods. With the exception of stony soils, the land of the areas studied had a plant cover. This statement is not inconsistent with the previous remarks regarding deforestation, as the disappearance of the pine, the cycad, and the pandanus has been offset by the spread of kaya (miscanthus) grass. Boundary paths also keep the soil in place. They often roughly follow the slope and are sufficiently crooked and winding and of sufficient depth to prevent washing away of large quantities of soil. While there is no complex irrigation system in these areas, the small ditches which carry the water down the slope are winding and covered on their borders by weeds. Occasionally one can see a farmer shovelling up the soil accumulated in a natural catchment in a bend of one of these ditches and restoring the lost soil to his land.

134 133 137 185 [487] [317]

In all areas, equally simple devices to protect the soil could be observed. Roadside borders of stone, like the stone of a rock garden, often line the fields adjoining main roads. (One could write a long essay on stones and the part they play in the culture of the people). These stones come from the fields. If fields do not have stone borders, weeds are left to grow. They are cropped, but the roots are left in the soil. In Hanashiro, stone fences on slopes and contour breaks are a common sight. Sometimes these have the appearance of blunt wedges, the end of the wedge going up the ravine. These stones have been painstakingly gathered from nearby areas.

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Terracing is practiced in a crude form in these areas. It really is step or bench cultivation, the plots being above one another in step like order. The function of terracing is, in the case of the dry crop land, to bring more land under cultivation, protecting it from washing away; in the case of the rice fields, it supplies flat land for cultivation at different levels. In the areas studied, terracing did not go all the way up the mountain side, although this practice can be observed in parts of Okinawa.

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Very frequently the ledges of the terraces are covered with a border of weeds or cropped grass which prevent soil runoff down the hill. In the Matsuda area, rice is grown up a narrow mountain valley, or ravine, with trees and shrubbery on the hillsides growing to the very edge of the cultivated plots. In rice terracing, the boundary paths often divide one step from another with openings in the ditches to allow the passage of water to the level below.

home country. Nevertheless, many aspects of Okinawan life still suggest an earlier phase in which independent developments gave the islands their own particular culture.

The Okinawan people, approximately 655,000 as counted in 1954, live in an area of about 454 square miles. Their major economic activities have traditionally been agriculture and fishing. In 1945 a long, peaceful existence was brought to an abrupt end during the final battles of World War II in the Pacific. As a result of world conditions Okinawans have been placed under American administration for an indefinite period of time. Today large numbers of men—and some women—find employment as unskilled and semiskilled laborers with the American forces. Gradual training for highly skilled jobs widens these opportunities for employment. Indirectly Okinawan life is influenced by Americans through stimulation of trade, building, and improved health conditions. Land requirements of the American forces in some areas also have influenced the settlement pattern. While these changes have affected the entire island to some degree, the greatest changes are noticeable in the central part around Naha where American administrative and military personnel are located. The village of Taira in the northern province of Kunigami, where the present study was located, had been subject to relatively few of these postwar changes in 1954. Isolated since earliest times because of mountainous terrain, this part of the island participates, as it probably always did, marginally in cultural influences which affect the center of the island. A great deal of cultural stability has therefore been preserved until the present day.

Nevertheless, it is useful to remember that the population of northern Okinawa is linked with the rest of the island by an efficient communications system. Roads connect almost all settlements in the north with the central island, and a bus transportation system extends its service into the remote areas. But long before all villages were connected by road with the center of Okinawa, people of Kunigami province traveled by foot over the many trails which traverse the mountains, and, since the turn of the century, many have left their home villages. Some went to Japan as laborers; others settled in the Japanese-controlled Islands of the Pacific, and some families joined the numerous Okinawan settlements in South American countries.

LANGUAGE

Taira people are bilingual. Okinawan, which linguists consider a separate language, has many regional dialects, some of which are not

2:Maretzki & Maretzki E-5 (1954-1955) 1963 AC7 Okinawa AC7
Taira

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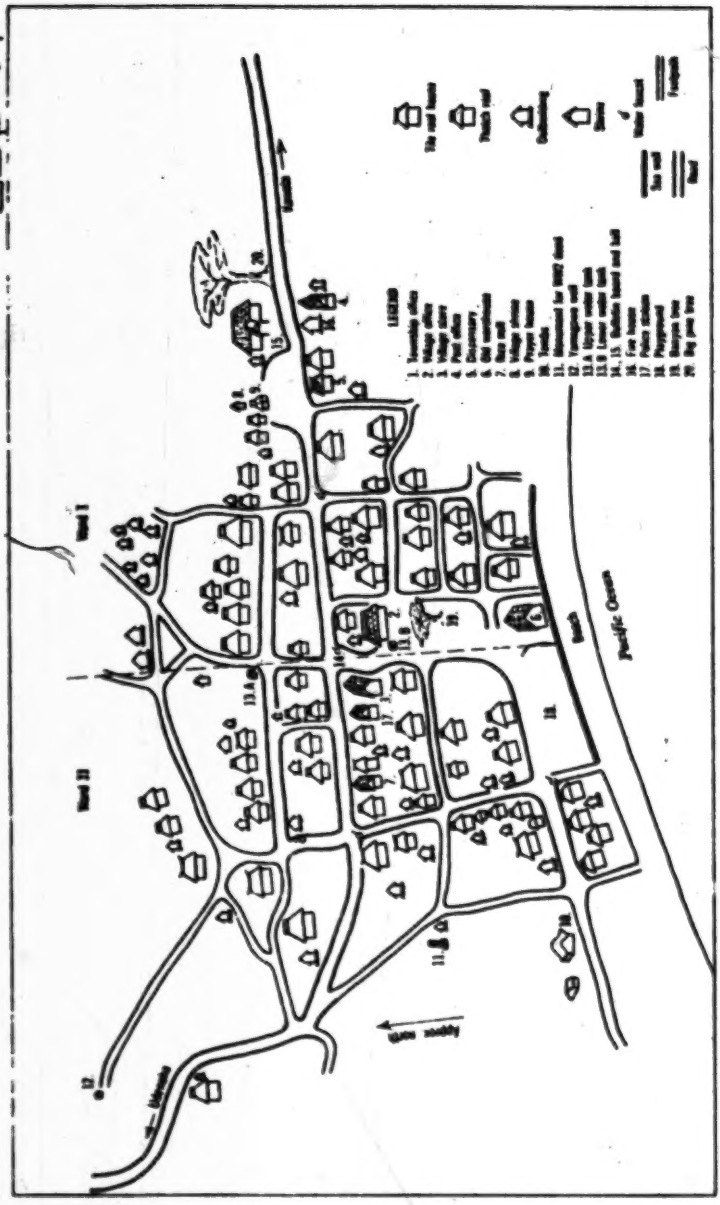

Map 2. Taira, central community.

312 Water is diverted from a stream a mile
365 above the village and piped into the upper and lower tanks where
[482] people fill their buckets which they carry home on a shoulder yoke.
[859] Both tanks always attract children. Before faucets were installed, the two spigots on each tank were closed with a wooden stopper which the children often pulled to get a drink or water to play in. An open lot surrounding the upper water tank is another popular play area.

361 On the eastern side of the village below the main road lies a flat sandy plain, separating the actual beach from the houses above. Children are frequently found playing there or walking along the beach
[764] to the mouth of the Noro Mata and Fukuji rivers, which reach the sea
[211] about 400 yards away. To the west of the central village lie the tombs and the monument for the war dead of the village.

487 Many hills around the village drop off vertically toward the south;
[133] these drops are partly effects of the geological conditions, such as karst depressions, partly caused by erosion of drainage during the heavy rains. Narrow paths, leading up the steep claylike hillsides, are slippery
[491] and very treacherous during rains. On the way to school in Kawata, the neighboring village, children have to pass a section of the road where river and rains have washed away the bank so badly that a misstep on the edge of the road could lead to a fall of more than 50 feet.

312 The little river which runs through parts of the valley behind Taira
[857] is another gathering place of children. A path alongside it leads into
[487] the hills and mountain forest lands. Seven minutes walking along this path takes one to Umugui, a natural swimming hole which also serves as one of the favorite laundry places. During the summer the river offers several other popular swimming spots downstream from Umugui.
[296] There is also a little concrete bridge in the rice fields beyond the houses, where adults and children go to wash laundry and sometimes pots and pans. Yamagawa well is a water hole, lined with concrete, near the northwestern part of Taira. Before water faucets were installed, girls frequently went there to wash their hair and do laundry.

859 Children go to the fields to look for flowers and berries or, in the
[484] case of older boys, to cut grass for animals. Distances covered by any child depend, of course, on the age. Younger siblings under 5 accompany the older ones to places beyond the area, but no expeditions extend to areas that are not also regularly traversed by adults in the course of their daily duties. Perhaps because of the multiple rivers and water sources, the beach offers less enticement than one might expect. On some days a group may decide to play on the beach, but since sand is also available throughout the village, everybody will soon shift back to some other area inland.

137 Tropical plants, bushes, and trees grow at sea level. At higher ele-

of the permanent Tairan families fish; the majority of the fishermen only two 226 are migrants from the surrounding islands who come for a season, [166] leaving their families behind. A few families have moved in permanently. The fishermen supply Taira, but most of the catch is peddled [438] in the Nago market by the fishermen's wives. Some of the more enterprising and mercantile-minded women in the village buy up fish and [443] peddle it for a profit.

Two or three times a year, during February or March, large fishing 226 boats from Henza Island land in Taira with whale meat. All the able 443 women look forward to making extra cash at this time, for whale meat is considered a delicacy in homes where meat is rare. Blubber is eaten [262] and used as frying fat. The distribution of whale meat is arranged by one village woman whose fishermen relatives from Henza supply it in response to her request. She acts as agent, distributing the meat to the women on consignment.

LUMBERING

The main source of immediate cash for most families is firewood. 313 Forest land in the mountains is owned by the township and the village, [423] except for some woods near the fields, which are personal property. The township permits the village to exploit a certain region surrounding the community in return for payment of a forest tax. This tax is [651] levied on firewood bundles or on lumber sold by villagers. Everyone in the village is free to cut wood in the designated area in any amount he desires. This, however, does not imply that unlimited cutting is possible, for resources have been utilized so heavily that most forests near the village are almost cleaned out, and it has become increasingly difficult to find wood. Reforestation has only recently been introduced [185] on a serious scale. Often villagers are found trespassing on land owned [423] by the central Ryukyan government in order to cut from the less de- [685] pleted forests there. Government officials are sympathetic to the villagers' plight, and they tend to dispose of such transgressions with a stern warning.

Men and women, and during vactions, some children over 12 years, [957] go to the forest. Most people prefer to walk and work in small groups. To reach a place high up in the hills, they may have to hike almost a mile from the center of Taira. The steep, narrow paths made by wood- [487] cutters traverse the mountains. Following the approach trails during the day, one can hear voices and the sawing of wood from many directions. All lumber people carry a short handsaw and a heavy bush knife [412]